

a connecting tube having first and second ends, said first end of said connecting tube being connectable to the shaft when the positioning collar is removed from the shaft;

an extension rod having first and second ends, said first end of said extension rod being connectable to said second end of said connecting tube, and

a cylinder having a body end and an operating end, said body end of said cylinder being connectable to the opening of the body, and said extension rod being rotatably fittable into said cylinder;

wherein the positioning collar is attachable to said second end of said extension rod, and the protective cover is attachable to said operating end of said cylinder.

12. (Amended) The extension assembly of claim 11, further comprising an adjustable handle assembly slidably mountable on said cylinder.

13. (Amended) The extension assembly of claim 12, wherein said handle assembly includes a rotatable tube mountable onto a periphery of said cylinder, and a threaded rod operably connectable to said handle.

REMARKS

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment, captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

Claims 1-10 have been canceled in light of the restriction requirement.

Applicant is unsure of the publication dates of the documents listed in the Information Disclosure Statement filed February 12, 2002, but admits that those publications are prior art to the present invention.

Claims 11 and 13 have been amended to overcome the outstanding objections, without narrowing the scope of the claims. In addition, the claims have been amended to better define the invention, and to define that the claimed extension assembly can be, but is not necessarily, attached to the cutting tool.

Independent claim 11 stands rejected on the basis of Gallat and applicant's admitted prior art (AAPA). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection because Gallat does not disclose or suggest an extension assembly in which a positioning collar adapted for use on the cutting tool without the extension assembly, is attachable to the extension rod, or a protective cover being attachable to the cylinder in the extension assembly. Applicant submits that these features of the "wherein" clause in claim 11 further define the structure of the claimed extension assembly.

Gallat does not disclose the claimed connecting tool with a positioning collar and a protective cover, as defined in independent claim 11. The tubular housing in Gallat does not have the claimed positioning collar or a protective cover. Moreover, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the AAPA, which uses a positioning collar for a circular cutter, with Gallat's socket wrench, which does not have a similar positioning collar or cutter.

There are significant differences between a socket wrench and a circular cutter that belie a suggestion or motivation to combine. Two-handed operation is important in a circular cutter because the blade can "walk" on a work-piece, and the cutter is difficult to control with only one hand. Socket wrenches do not walk, and one-handed control is not difficult. Thus, a skilled artisan would not look to socket wrenches to solve problems relating to circular cutters.

Claims 12-15 are dependent on claim 11, and are patentable for the reasons given with respect to claim 11. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of those claims is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

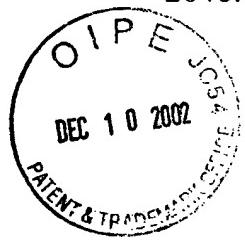
GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By



Patrick G. Burns
Registration No. 29,367

December 5, 2002
300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312.360.0080
Facsimile: 312.360.9315
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Claims 1-10 were canceled, without prejudice.

Claims 11, 12 and 13 were amended as follows:

11. (Amended) An extension assembly for a cutting tool having a body with an opening defined therein, a protective cover connected to the body, a shaft rotatably mounted within the body, a ~~connecting tube attached to the shaft~~, a positioning collar attached to the ~~connecting tube~~ ~~shaft~~, and a circular cutter attached to the positioning collar, comprising:

a connecting tube having first and second ends, said first end of said connecting tube being ~~connected~~ connectable to the shaft when the positioning collar is removed from the shaft;

an extension rod having first and second ends, said first end of said extension rod being ~~connected~~ connectable to said second end of said connecting tube; and

a cylinder having a body end and an operating end, said body end of said cylinder being ~~connected~~ connectable to the opening of the body, and said extension rod being rotatably ~~fitted~~ fittable into said cylinder;

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wherein the connecting tube with the positioning collar is attachedattachable to said second end of said extension rod, and the protective cover is attachedattachable to said operating end of said cylinder.

12. (Amended) The extension assembly of claim 11, further comprising an adjustable handle assembly slidably mountedmountable on said cylinder.

13. (Amended) The extension assembly of claim 12, wherein said handle assembly includes a rotatable tube mountedmountable onto a periphery of said cylinder, and a threaded rod operably connectedconnectable to asaid handle.